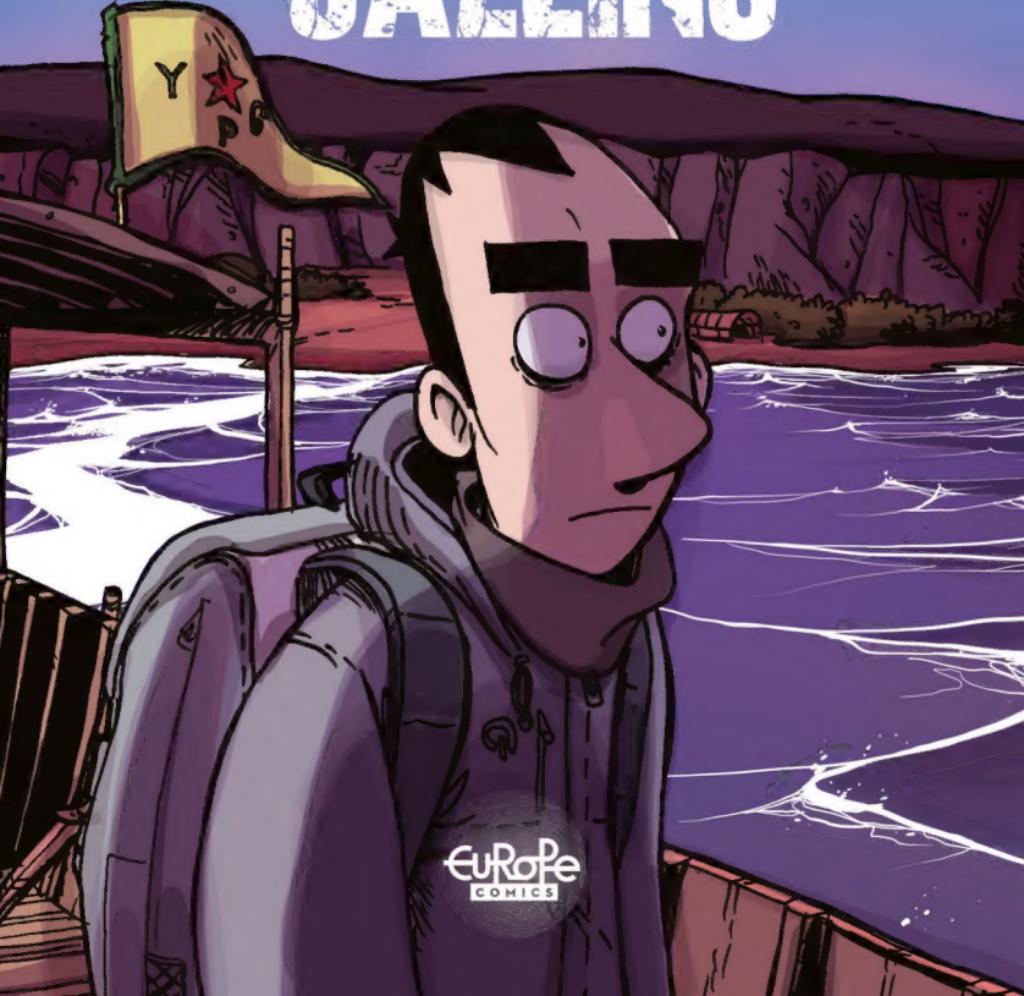


ZEROCALCARE KOBANE CALLING



Europe
COMICS

KOBANE CALLING

FACES, WORDS AND DOODLES FROM
REBIBBIA TO THE TURKISH-SYRIAN BORDER.

BY ZEROCALCARE



BLAM.

BLAM
BLAM.

RATATATA

TUM-TUM.

WHAT ABOUT
THESE?

BOOM.
BLAM.

WHEN
YOU HEAR
"RATATATA",
IT'S ISIS.

WHEN YOU HEAR
"TUM TUM TUM",
IT'S US.

WHAT ABOUT
SBOOM?

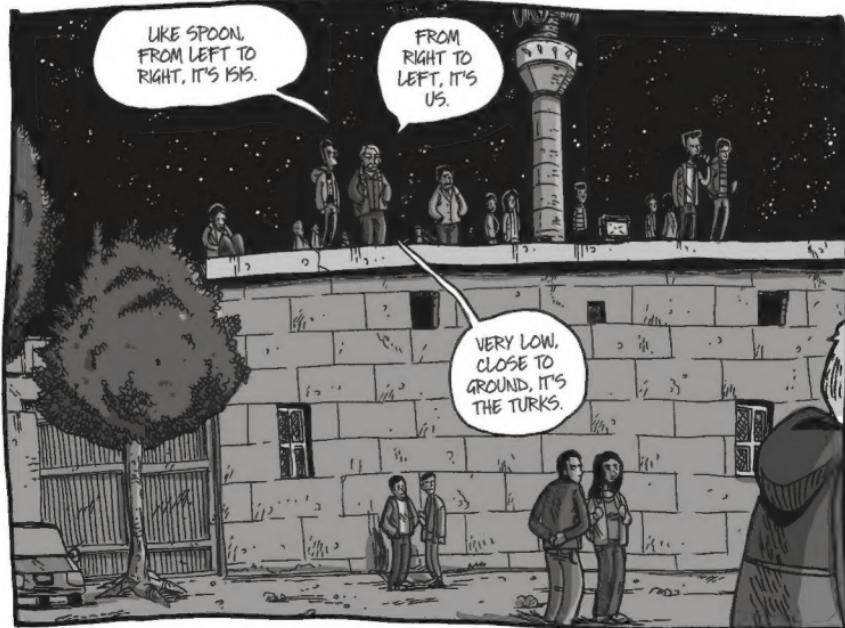
WELL, THAT
DEPENDS.

FIRE THEN
SBOOM,
IT'S THE
AMERICANS.

SBOOM
ONLY,
IT'S
ISIS.



I CLOSE MY EYES. FOCUS ON WHAT IS HAPPENING. BUT THE QUESTION'S ALWAYS THE SAME.



PROLOGUE

I NEVER QUITE KNOW HOW FAR BACK TO GO, WITH EVENTS. TWO DAYS? A WEEK?
A MONTH?



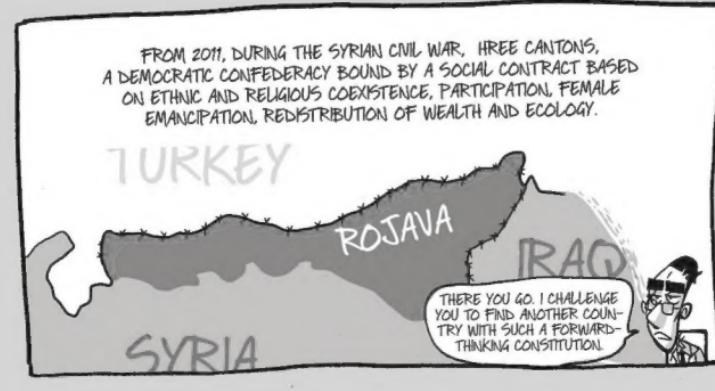
SORRY, FOLKS. I SWEAR, I AINT TAKING THE PISS. A GIRL
I'LL BE REPRESENTING AS A KOALA ONCE ASKED ME THIS:



THIS IS WHY I'M GOING TO DO A BRIEF RECAP NOW. IF YOU ALREADY KNOW IT, SKIP IT, LIKE YOU DO WITH ADVERTS BEFORE YOUTUBE VIDEOS. I'M EVEN GOING TO PLACE THAT GREY HIGHLIGHT OVER WHAT YOU CAN SKIP.



FROM 2011, DURING THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR, THREE CANTONS, A DEMOCRATIC CONFEDERACY BOUND BY A SOCIAL CONTRACT BASED ON ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS COEXISTENCE, PARTICIPATION, FEMALE EMANCIPATION, REDISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH AND ECOLOGY.



FUCKING LECTURES>>SKP

BUT ISIS' ADVANCE INTO SYRIA SOON REACHED THE ROJAVA.
SEVERAL VILLAGES WERE OCCUPIED AND PEOPLE HAD TO FLEE IN
THEIR THOUSANDS, TO ESCAPE THE MASSACRES AND ABDUCTIONS
OF THE CALIPHATE.

(LET'S NOT DWELL ON
MY OWN GRAPHIC INTER-
PRETATION OF ISIS NOW)

KOBANE'S STILL STANDING,
HOWEVER.

BOTH THE KURDISH PEOPLE PROTECTION UNITS -YPJ (FEMALE) AND YPG (MIXED)
- HAVE BEEN HOLDING THEIR GROUND AGAINST ISIS AND THEIR SIEGE FOR MONTHS,
DESPITE THE DIFFERENCES IN WEAPONS AND MEANS.

PAYING A MASSIVE PRICE IN BLOOD.

OK, END OF THE FUCKING LECTURE

THAT'S WHY
YOUR VOICE
SHAKES AT
THE VERY
NAME.

AND WHY IT MIGHT BE BEST NOT
TO MENTION IT WITH MY FOLKS.

=CLACK= IS IT OPEN?

WHILE YOU GO UP, I SHALL OFFER
A FLOWER FOR ALL THE HISTORIANS,
GEOGRAPHICAL RESEARCHERS AND
LOVERS OF IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS WHO
DIED READING YOUR SUMMARY.

MAY GOD
HAVE MERCY
ON US ALL.

WELL, I'D LIKE TO
SEE YOU DO IT
IN TWO PAGES.

PIXEL

THE RESOLUTION'S FAULT, THAT'S WHAT IT IS. HERE I AM, ABOUT TO DO SOMETHING NICE, YET I FEEL AS THOUGH I'M ABOUT TO THROW A FIRECRACKER AT THE HEADMISTRESS. (SHE WAS A BITCH, ANYWAY, SO EVEN THAT'S GOT ITS OWN MORAL VALUE)

THING IS THAT IF I DRAW A PIE CHART OF MY MOTIVATIONS, THERE'S A SLICE I DON'T SEEM TO BE ABLE TO BRING TO FOCUS

① IT IS RIGHT TO DEFEND THE "ROJAVA EXPERIENCE" AS IT PROVIDES AN EXAMPLE OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE FOR THE WHOLE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

② ITALIAN MEDIA TEND TO FOCUS ON AND SENSATIONALISE THE CONFLICT ALONE, SO WE COULD COVER A DIFFERENT ANGLE.

③ WHO THE FUCK'S THE NONCOMMIT-TAL CAR-TOONIST NOW, EH? I'VE BEEN TO KOBANE, FUCKERS!

④ ... ?

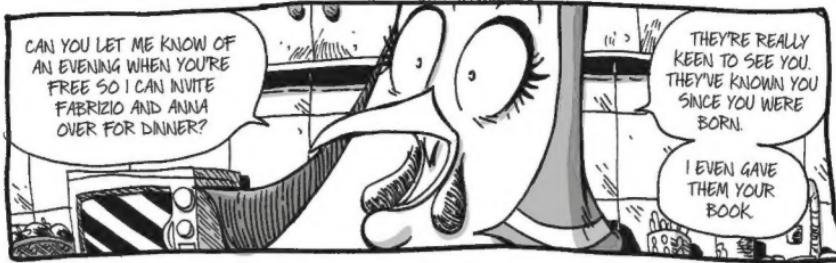
SEE, THE FOURTH SLICE, THE LARGEST, IS OUT OF FOCUS. IT "PIXELATES". I DON'T GET IT.

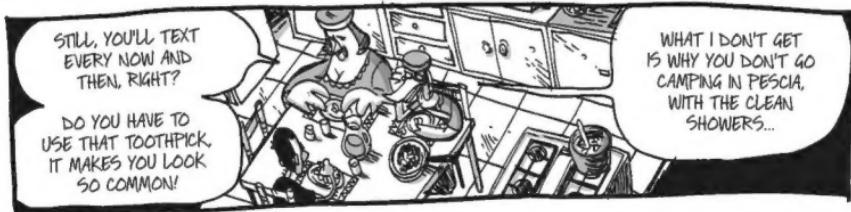
THERE IS NO SOFTWARE THAT CAN INCREASE AN IMAGE RESOLUTION WITHOUT LOSING QUALITY.

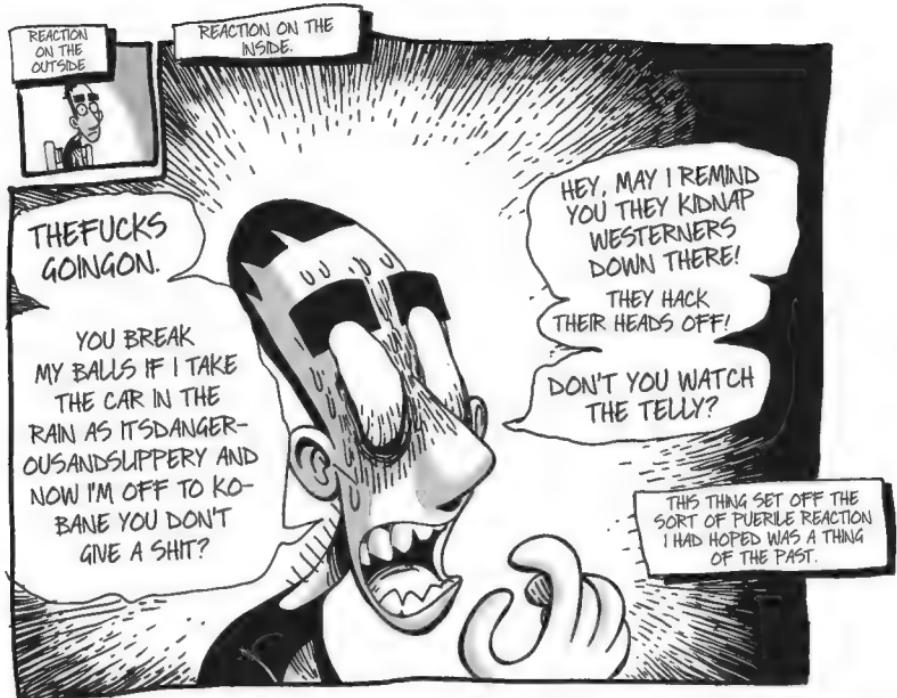
IT'S JUST THAT IF YOU DON'T SHARPEN THAT PART, EVERYTHING SHAKES.

AND YOU'LL ALWAYS FEEL AS THOUGH YOU'RE ABOUT TO THROW A FIRECRACKER AT MISS MARANI.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT







STILL, WHAT CAN THEY SAY TO A 31-YEAR OLD? YOU'RE AN ADULT AT 31. YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING. NOBODY CAN FORCE YOU TO DO OR STOP YOU DOING ANYTHING.



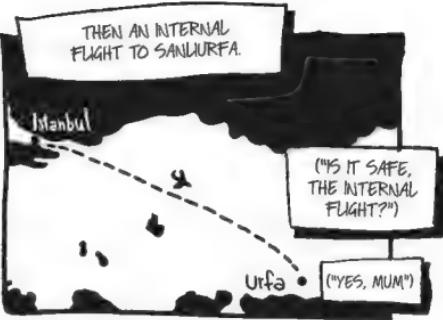
(WHICH IS PRECISELY WHY I THEN GAVE THE GASTROSCOPY A MISS)

RELAY



IT'S THE ROMAN RELAY FOR KOBANE. A FEW PEOPLE FROM COMMUNITY CENTRES STRIVING TO WORK WITH OTHER RELAYS TO ENSURE TWO KINDS OF OUTCOMES:





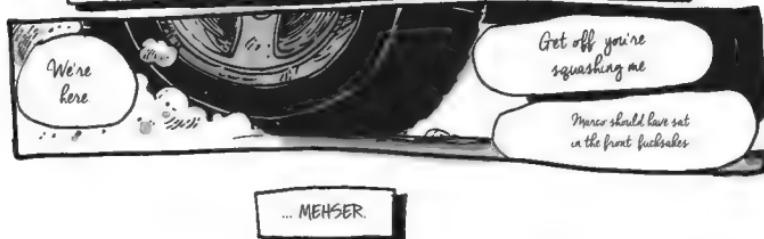
(THIS THING THAT I'M OFF TO A WAR ZONE AND MOTHER WORRIES ABOUT THE HIGHWAY CODE IS PATHOLOGICAL, I FEAR).



THEN, DUNNO, WE MAY CATCH A LIFT, A TAXI, A BUS, FUCK KNOWS... BUT IT'S EIGHT OF US, I'M SURE A BRAINIAC WILL HAVE PRINTED HOW TO GET THERE OFF THE INTERNET..



TO OUR VILLAGE, MUM, THE ONE OPPOSITE THE BORDER.



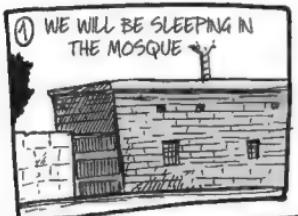
"PROMISE YOU'LL BE CAREFUL?
SERIOUSLY.
THEIR DRIVING'S WORSE THAN IN NAPLES."

MEHSER

MEHSER'S A VILLAGE OF WHAT? ONE HUNDRED PEOPLE?
I'D LOVE TO ARGUE IN FAVOUR OF ITS ARCHITECTURE, BUT ITS MERITS LAY ELSEWHERE.



NOT ALL ARE PERMANENT RESIDENTS: THERE ARE KURDS FROM FAR AND WIDE THERE TO SUPPORT KOBANE, FIGHTERS' FAMILIES AND FRIENDS, A FEW INTERNATIONAL SUPPORTERS
MY INTELLIGENCE LEADS ME TO GATHER THAT:



YOU CAN SMELL FEET BUT AFTER SLEEPING ON THE TATAMI OF A WELL-KNOWN GYM IN MILAN, IT FEELS LIKE PERFUME TO ME.



(TO PROTECT MY FRIEND ZP'S PRIVACY, HE SHALL BE REPRESENTED WEARING A GAS MASK)

② THE CENTRAL FOCUS OF THE VILLAGE'S SOCIAL ORGANISATION IS CHAI MAN.
HE STANDS OUTSIDE THE MOSQUE ALL DAY, SERVING EVERYONE FREE TEA.



③ EVERYONE GETS A FREE MEAL FOR BREAKFAST AND DINNER TOO.



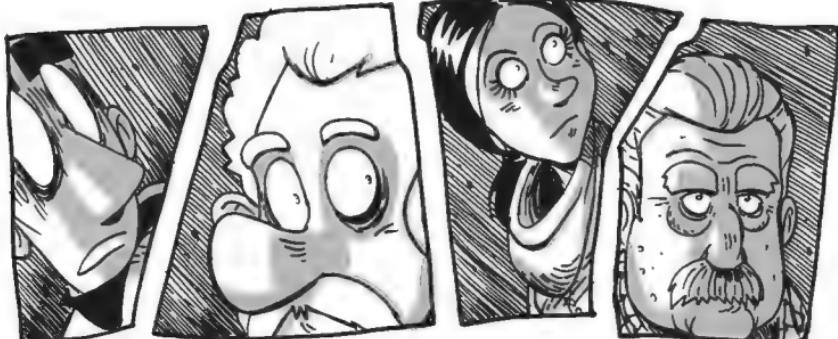


RIGHT. (4) FIGHTERS ALSO COME TO THIS VILLAGE FOR A WELL-EARNED REST.



("GOTCHA" IS GREAT IN ANY SITUATION. THANK GOD FOR SLANG.)

AIR STRIKE







(SOME NOTES ON THE DIALOGUES YOU'RE READING)

WORKING ON THIS COMIC REQUIRED AN EXERCISE IN SYNTHESIS THAT SOMEWHAT ALTERED ITS ADHERENCE TO REALITY, TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST.

LET'S TAKE THIS APPARENTLY NORMAL DIALOGUE, FOR INSTANCE:



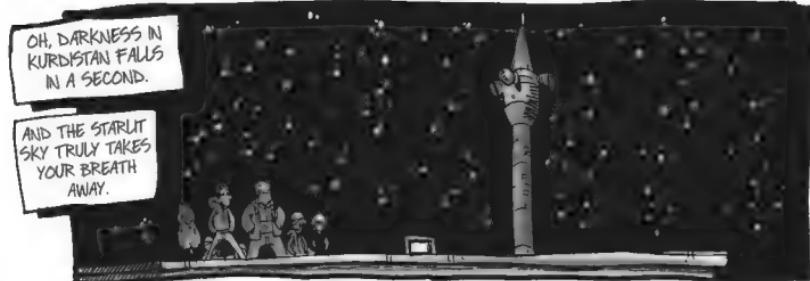
BUT, IT'S EIGHT OF US AND WE'RE HALF MONKEYS. SO THIS IS HOW IT REALLY WENT:



IF YOU ADD THAT AROUND 90% OF THE PEOPLE THERE DO NOT SPEAK ANYTHING OTHER THAN FUCKING KURDISH, NOT EVEN GESTURING HELPS.



WHICH IS WHY I OPTED FOR A MORE ESSENTIAL REPRESENTATION.



THEN THERE'S SUCH EMOTION AND SILENCE THAT I CAN DRAW THEM JUST AS THEY ARE, WITH NO NEED FOR SYNTHESIS OR OMISSIONS.

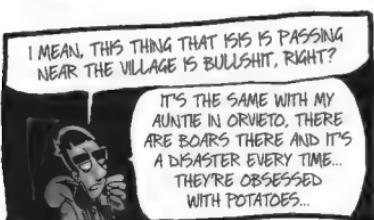
LIGHT

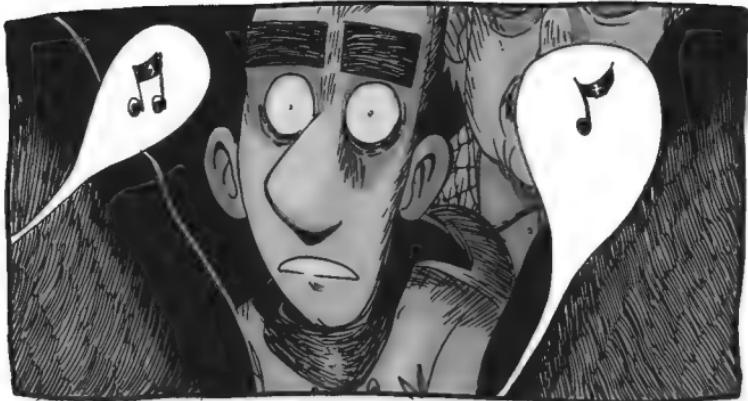
RATATATA-

BLAM

BLAM







CONTRADDIZIONI.

"TERCHÉ STO QUA?"

DEVO METTERE
A FUOCO QUELLA
RISPOSTA -
PER FORZA.

JENNÖ PASSÒ LA NOTTE CON GLI OCCHI SBARRATI A CHIEDERMI CHIACCIA MELAFFATO FA', A STARE QUA PER TERRA COLL'ISIS CHE STRISCA LÀ FUORI -



ECCO. STA COSA DELL'ISIS MI METTE A DISAGIO. COME IMMAGINARIO, PROPRIO.
SENTO CHE STO SOVRAPPONENDO DUE PIANI DIVERSI. CIOÈ.



CAPITO PERCHÉ STO A DISAGIO? PERCHÉ QUELLA CATEGORIA, QUEL MALE ASSOLUTO, FUORI DA KEN IL GUERRIERO MI PARE UNA SEMPLIFICAZIONE. VORREI COGLIERE DELLE PROSPETTIVE DIVERSE. MA COME FAI?

COME FAI QUANDO TI RIMBOMBANO IN TESTA LE VOCI DEL VILLAGGIO, CHE SCHIACCIANO OGNI COSA?

DA NOI HANNO UCCISO 80 PERSONE - SERPOTONI ANCHE I BAMBINI -

RAPTO PIÙ DI 300 DONNE -

IO NON SO PIÙ DOV'È MIA FIGLIA -
COSA LE STANNO FACENDO -

PERÒ QUESTO LO VOGLIONO LORO. HANNO FATTO UN BRAND DEL TERRORE. ORA LA GENTE SCAPPA PRIMA CHE ARRIVINO, COSÌ MANCO DEVONO COMBATTERE.

Video più cliccati

GATTINO RIMBALZA SU TORTA

DECAPITAZIONE OSTAGGIO USA

GIANNI MORANDI TUTTA LA VERITÀ

POSSIAMO ANCORA MIGLIORARE.

È UNA ROBA DI MARKETING

SIAMO PRONTI AL DERBY COI GATTINI -

EVEN KEN THE WARRIOR'S NASTY PUNKS DIDN'T POP OUT OF NOWHERE.
THEY WERE THE EXPRESSION OF SOMETHING MORE STRUCTURED, LESS IRRATIONAL.

DUNNO, MAYBE SOMEONE
EXPLOITED THEM TO
DESTABILISE AN AREA.

OR SOMEONE MADE MONEY
OUT OF THEM AS THEY SOLD
THEM OIL FOR NOTHING.

STILL, I AINT
NO EXPERT ON
GEOPOLEITICS,
OR HOKUTO AND NANTO

BUT I KNOW THAT THE BOGEYMAN
ON HIS OWN DOES NOT CONQUER
HALF OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

PERHAPS, IF I RATIONALISE IT, I CAN FALL ASLEEP MORE EASILY.

OR PERHAPS THIS
FUCKWIT OVER
HERE COULD JUST
STOP CHATTING...

HEY, IT'S
TWO O'CLO
*lolo au
enu*

*uu
m*





BECAUSE IN REBIBBIA I FEEL AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD. I'M WHERE THINGS HAPPEN.



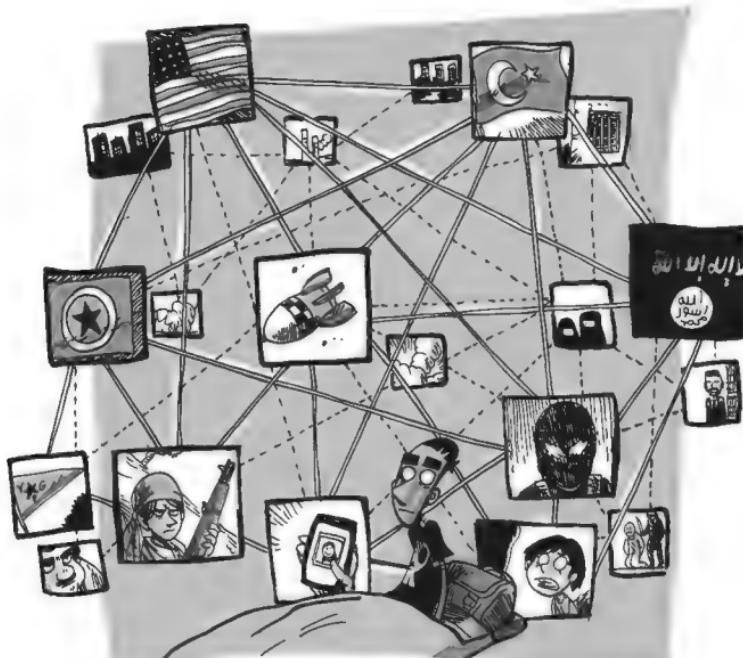
IN A VILLAGE WITH HOUSES MADE OF MUD AND NO MOTHERFUCKING BOG, BUT WHERE A KID AT NIGHT CAN CHAT TO HIS GIRLFRIEND ON SKYPE.



THE CENTRE OF ALL THE CONTRADICTIONS AND CONFLICTS OF THE GLOBALISED WORLD.

WHERE THE AMERICANS BOMB BUT NOT TOO MUCH, TURKEY IS WITHIN BUT REALLY HELPING ISIS AGAINST THE KURDS, THERE IS A MUSLIM SOCIETY WHO MADE OF THE LIBERATION OF WOMEN ITS FLAG FIGHTING AGAINST ANOTHER MUSLIM SOCIETY WHO MADE OF GENDER AND RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION ITS OWN.

AND POVERTY PROGRESS GROWING ECONOMY REPRESSION MEN WOMEN ROLES RELIGION OIL.....



YOU KNOW THAT MAX PEZZALI SONG? "WE ARE AT THE CENTRE OF THE WORLD/WE ARE IN IT TOO/WHERE EVERYTHING HAPPENS..."

WELL, I REALLY UNDERSTAND
THE MEANING HERE.

AND I FALL ASLEEP
LIKE A LOG, WITH NO
MELATONINE, INFUSIONS
OR VALERIAN.

WHITE RICE YELLOW RICE

THE "HUMANITARIAN" SIDE OF THE TRIP, AS WELL AS SUPPLYING MEDICINES, CONSISTS IN HELPING OUT IN THE WAREHOUSES WHERE PARCELS OF FOOD ARE PREPARED AND SHIPPED TO THE REFUGEE CAMPS.



THEREFORE EACH BAG MUST CONTAIN:



THE GOOD THING ABOUT DOING A JOB THAT IS SEDENTARY AS FUCK IS THAT HALF AN HOUR OF TOUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS ENOUGH TO MAKE ME FEEL HIGH AS A KITE, IN THE THROES OF SOME SORT OF MEGALOMANIAC STATE.





WHilst my armadillo friend helps me realise, the most horrendous scenarios pour through my mind.



ALRIGHTYTHEN. HERE GOES MY DREAM OF BECOMING A FATHER OF THE KURDISH HOMELAND.



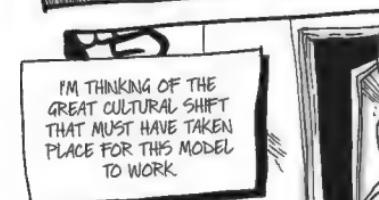
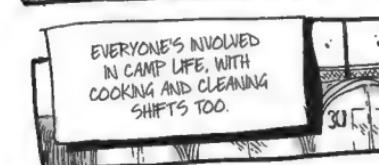
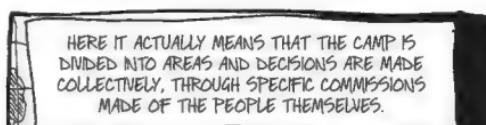
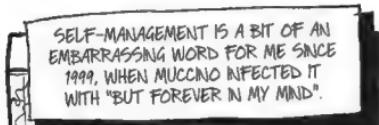
"YOU MIGHT WANT TO KEEP IT UNDER YOUR TONGUE."

THE ROJAVA MODEL

AT FIRST GLANCE, REFUGEE CAMPS LOOK THE SAME ALL OVER THE WORLD.

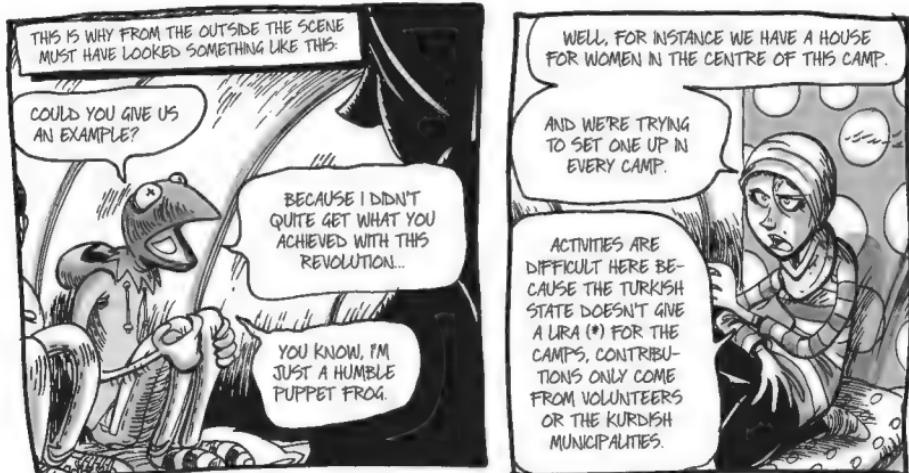


WHAT SETS IT APART FROM OTHER CIVIL DEFENCE CAMPS IS THAT EVERY ASPECT OF COMMUNAL LIFE IS MANAGED BY THE PEOPLE HERE.





MEET NEWROZ KOBANE, ONE OF THE CAMP LEADERS. I RECKON SHE'S EVEN YOUNGER THAN ME, BUT SHE OOZES AUTHORITY IN SUCH A WAY THAT I FEEL LIKE KERMIT OFF THE MUPPETS NEXT TO HER.



(*) IN TURKEY THEY HAVE THE TURKISH LIRA, SO THE EXPRESSION "I DON'T HAVE A LIRA"
SOUNDS RIGHT HERE RATHER THAN VINTAGE LIKE WITH US

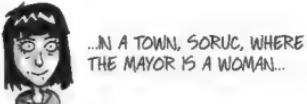
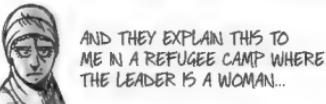




AS I LISTEN TO HER, I THINK OF OUR OWN DOMESTIC SHARKS, BUILDING CONSENSUS WITH PSEUDO-CRUSADES AGAINST ISLAM, FILLING OUR HEADS WITH NONSENSE ABOUT DEFENDING WOMEN'S RIGHTS...



...WHEREAS THE ONLY FIGHT AGAINST ISIS HAS BEEN THROUGH THE SACRIFICE OF MEN AND WOMEN RECLAIMING THEIR MUSLIM IDENTITY (AND NOT ONLY THAT, THE KURDS PEACEFULLY DWELL AMONGST SEVERAL DIFFERENT RELIGIONS)



THE FUCK ARE WE SUPPOSED TO TEACH THEM?

(HEY, I'M NOT SAYING THIS IS HEAVEN AND A PLACE WITHOUT CONTRADICTIONS, MIND. IT'S JUST THAT THEY'RE NOT THE ONES WE EXPECT WITH OUR WESTERN PARAMETRES AND STEREOTYPES.)



(PLUS, THEY'RE ODD OLDIES AND CHILDREN, THEY DON'T FOLLOW YOU, ASK YOU QUESTIONS, SAY "CANNAVARO!" AND THEY DON'T ASK IF YOU SUPPORT MILAN OR JUVE. THEY JUST STARE AT YOU.)



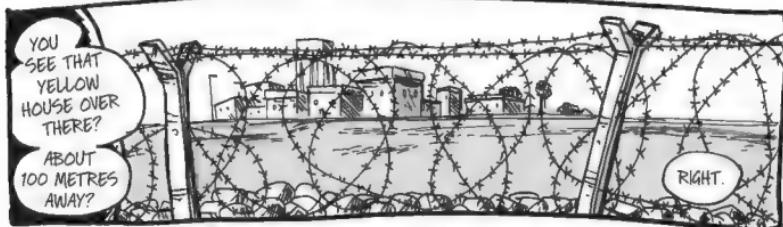
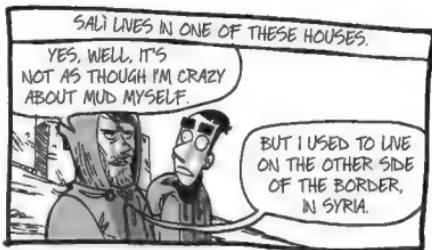
HOME

SORRY I DON'T RE-MEMBER THE NAME

IS AN EVEN SMALLER VILLAGE THAN MEHSER. WE WALK PAST IT TO GO HOME. IT'S ABOUT TEN MUD HOUSES AND SICKLY GOATS THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SPEND TWO CENTS TO BUY THEM GRASS TO GRAZE, POOR SODS.

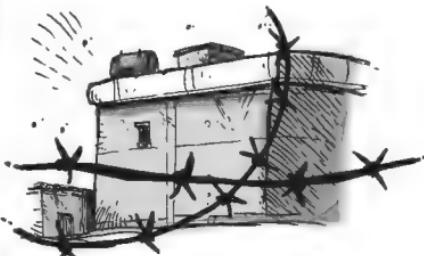


AH, AND IT'S REALLY NEAR THE BORDER. REALLY NEAR.





I TRY TO SHARPEN MY GAZE TO SEE IF I CAN CATCH A GLIMPSE OF SOMETHING BEHIND THOSE WINDOWS.



IM SURE IM GOING TO GET CRAZY SCARED LIKE I DID IN LOCH NESS.



AND REMAIN THOSE SHADOWS INSIDE MY HEAD.

EVERY THING

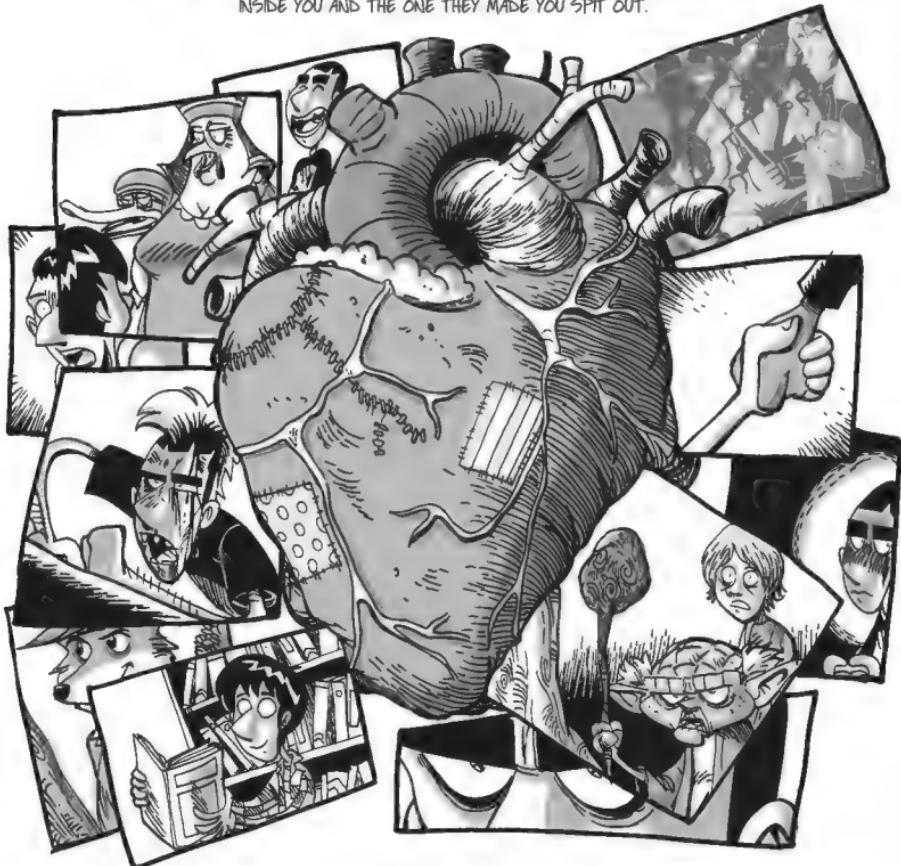




HEARTS ARE NOT ALL THE SAME. THEY ARE MODELLED AND MOULDED FROM EXPERIENCES.
LIKE A TREE TRUNK THAT GROWS BENT, ADJUSTING TO ITS SURROUNDINGS.



AND EVERYTHING THAT HELPED SHAPE YOUR HEART...TEACHINGS, LEARNINGS,
THINGS THAT MADE YOU CRY, THAT MADE YOU LAUGH, THE BLOOD THAT BOILED
INSIDE YOU AND THE ONE THEY MADE YOU SPIT OUT.



EVERY THING.

IS IN KOBANE TODAY.

BEYOND THE STREAM (PARMA 1922)



"IF TONIGHT LASTED ONE HUNDRED YEARS..."



"...WE'D STAY AWAKE, EMBRACING IN THE DARK..."



"...THE ENEMY IS UPON OUR CITY."



"IF TONIGHT LASTED ONE HUNDRED YEARS..."



"...WE'D BE STANDING, EMBRACING A DREAM..."



"...WITH WRITING ON ITS FACE..."



"...THERE'LL BE NO PASSING THROUGH HERE."

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